



## **Lapley, Stretton and Wheaton Aston Council Policy and procedure for co-opting a new Councillor**

The Co-Option Policy was adopted by Full Council at its Meeting held on 16<sup>th</sup> May 2019

This procedure is based on NALC Legal Briefing L15-08 – Good practice for selection of candidates for co-option to local Councils.

Councils are permitted to exercise the power to co-opt a person on to the Council to fill a casual vacancy when the requirements to hold an election have not been met (i.e. The vacancy has been the subject of a public notice and less than 10 registered electors have requested an election by a deadline date specified by the District Returning Officer).

Although seeking “expressions of interest” is not a legal requirement, the National Association of Local Councils (NALC) recommends that Councils always give public notice of vacancies because this makes the process of co-option open and transparent and should attract more potential candidates.

Whenever the need for co-option arises, LSWA Parish Council will consider advertising the vacancy to seek and encourage ‘expressions of interest’ by a specified date from anyone living or working in the parish or within 3 miles of its boundaries who is eligible to stand as a Councillor. All potential candidates will be requested to put their request for consideration by completing an application form (See Appendix A). Applicants should attend at least three Council meetings as members of the public before applying to become a Councillor.

Please note it is a condition of a Councillor that a means of contact by telephone ( the Parish Council office telephone number is acceptable ) and Council e-mail will be public information. A Council email address will be provided. A Declaration of Interests Form must be completed and will be published.

At the next Full Council meeting:

- i. Clerk to confirm that each candidate is qualified to become a Councillor and is not disqualified from being a Councillor as set out in the Local Government Act 1972 s79 and s80;
- ii. Chairman to offer opportunity for debate on the order of priority to offer co-option
- iii. Vote on the acceptability of each candidate for co-option, utilising the ‘person specification’ criteria set out below and any personal statements requested from and provided by candidates. An absolute majority vote is required for each candidate from all members present and entitled to vote (LGA 1972 Sch. 12. Para 39) (The applicant with the least number of votes casted will be deleted and the vote taken again and again etc. until the number of candidates equals the number of vacancies);
- iv. Vote to select the order in which acceptable candidates (decided by the vote at iii above) should be approached to offer co-option on this occasion.
- v. The Clerk to approach and offer co-option to candidate(s) after the meeting in the order of priority determined by the vote at iii above, if the first choice does not accept the post then the second is to be approached and so on until the ranking list is exhausted.

The Clerk to notify Electoral Services of the new Councillor appointment, initiate ‘acceptance of office’ paperwork and ‘registration of interests’

Assuming that the co-option position is filled and all paperwork completed, formally ratify the appointment at the next Full Council meeting.

If no one accepts the vacant post(s), the whole process is to be repeated when new individuals expressing interest are identified.

## **CO-OPTED COUNCILLOR PERSON SPECIFICATION**

### Personal Attributes

- Sound knowledge and understanding of local affairs and the local community.
- Forward thinking
- Can bring a new skill, expertise or key local knowledge to the Council.

### Experience, Skills, Knowledge and Ability

- Ability to listen constructively
- A good team player
- Ability to pick up and run with a variety of projects
- Solid interest in local matters
- Ability and willingness to represent the Council and their community
- Good interpersonal skills and able to contribute opinions at meetings whilst willing to see others views and accept majority decisions.
- Ability to communicate succinctly and clearly.
- Ability and willingness to work closely with other members and to maintain good working relationships with all members and staff.
- Ability and willingness to work with the Council's partners (e.g. voluntary groups, other Community Councils, principal authority, charities).
- Ability and willingness to undertake induction training and other relevant training.
- Experience of working or being a member in a local authority or other public body
- Experience of working with voluntary and or local community / interest groups
- Basic knowledge of legal issues relating to Town, Parish and Community Councils or local authorities
- Experience of delivering presentations

### Circumstances

- Ability and willingness to attend meetings of the Council (or meetings of other local authorities and local bodies) at any time and events in the evening and at weekends.



## APPENDIX A

Office F7  
South Staffordshire Business Hub  
South Staffordshire District Council  
Wolverhampton Road  
Codsall  
Wolverhampton  
Staffordshire  
WV8 1PE  
Tel: 01902 842556  
office@wheatonastonparishcouncil.gov.uk  
Parish Council Clerk: Amy Watson

### APPLICATION FORM FOR THE ROLE OF COUNCILLOR ON LAPLEY, STRETTON AND WHEATON ASTON PARISH COUNCIL

Full name:

Home address inc. Postcode:

Telephone number:

Mobile number:

Email:

It is a condition of being a Councillor for LSWA PC that your phone number (office) and Council email address (official email address will be supplied) be made public via notice boards and website.

#### LEGAL QUALIFICATIONS FOR BEING A COUNCILLOR QUALIFICATIONS

(To qualify you must be able to answer 'Yes' to both of the questions below)

Are you a British citizen, a Commonwealth citizen or a citizen of a European Union country? **Yes/No**

Are you 18 or over? **Yes/No**

(To qualify you must be able to answer 'Yes' to at least one of the questions below)

Are you on the electoral register for the parish? **Yes/No**

Have you lived either in the ward of Lapley, Stretton or Wheaton Aston, or within three miles of its boundary, for at least a year? **Yes/No**

Have you been the owner or tenant of land in the ward of Lapley, Stretton or Wheaton Aston for at least a year? **Yes/No**

Have you had your only or main place of work in ward of Lapley, Stretton or Wheaton Aston for at least a year? **Yes/No**

#### DISQUALIFICATIONS

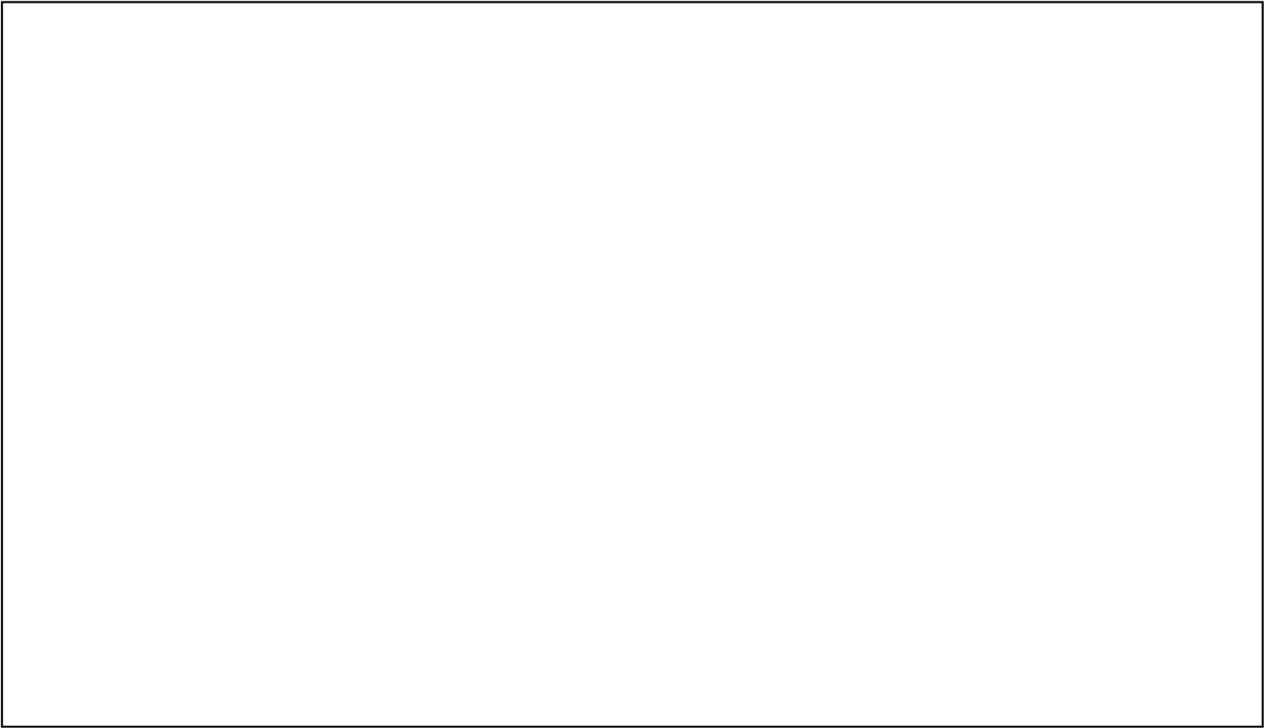
(You must be able to answer No to all of the questions below to be eligible to serve as a councillor)

Are you the subject of a bankruptcy restrictions order or interim order? **Yes/No**

Have you within the last five years been convicted of an offence in the UK, the Channel Islands or the Isle of Man which resulted in a sentence of imprisonment (whether suspended or not) for a period of three months or more without the option of a fine? **Yes/No**

Are you disqualified by order of a court from being a member of a local authority? **Yes/No**

Please briefly outline of why you are interested in being a Councillor.



Please tell us something about the life experience you will bring to the Council, for example, previous local government experience, work in the voluntary or charitable sector, business or trade union experience.



Please tell us something about the skills you feel you will bring to the Council, for example, professional qualifications, financial or project management expertise.

Are there any questions you would like to ask the council?

Signed.....

Date: .....